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Sent: 7/25/2012 5:36:42 PM
To: vincent.zenone@epa.gov
CC:
Subject: Fw: Harrisburg Patriot-News - EPA says Dimock water is safe to drink

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----- Original Message -----

From: Roy Seneca

Sent: 07/25/2012 05:27 PM EDT

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Subject: Harrisburg Patriot-News - EPA says Dimock water is safe to drink

EPA says Dimock water is safe to drink

Published: Wednesday, July 25, 2012, 3:29 PM **Updated:** Wednesday, July 25, 2012, 4:12 PM

By **DONALD GILLILAND**, The Patriot-News

The water in Dimock is safe to drink.

That's the conclusion of the federal Environmental Protection Agency, which declared on Wednesday that well water in the Susquehanna County town is safe and requires no further testing.

Dimock water has been the banner beneath which anti-fracking activists have marched since methane migrated into a local aquifer as a result of inadequate cementing on nearby natural gas wells drilled by Cabot Oil & Gas.

Some residents, however, have claimed there was more than just natural gas contaminating their water, and documentary filmmaker Josh Fox made Dimock the centerpiece of his controversial anti-fracking film "Gasland."

State environmental regulators said the water was fine, but the howl and cry from some of the residents and the national activists who supported them prompted the EPA to step in.

The EPA said Wednesday that sampling at five homes revealed naturally occurring arsenic, barium and manganese at levels that could present a health concern. In all cases, the agency said, "the residents have now or will have their own treatment systems that can reduce concentrations of those hazardous substances to acceptable levels at the tap."

In a statement, the EPA said it "has provided the residents with all of their sampling results and has no further plans to conduct additional drinking water sampling in Dimock."

The EPA also said it is no longer necessary to provide residents with alternative water and is working with residents on the schedule to disconnect the alternate water sources provided by EPA.

“Our goal was to provide the Dimock community with complete and reliable information about the presence of contaminants in their drinking water and to determine whether further action was warranted to protect public health,” said EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. “The sampling and an evaluation of the particular circumstances at each home did not indicate levels of contaminants that would give EPA reason to take further action. Throughout EPA's work in Dimock, the Agency has used the best available scientific data to provide clarity to Dimock residents and address their concerns about the safety of their drinking water.”

Between January and June 2012, EPA sampled private drinking water wells serving 64 homes.

Craig and Julie Sautner, Dimock residents who were most critical of their water and most involved with trying to get EPA to come in and test, were not immediately available for comment.

The gas industry breathed a sigh of relief, generally.

After sharply criticizing the EPA for stepping in in the first place, gas company officials said Wednesday's announcement was final confirmation of what they've known all along.

Cabot spokesman George Stark said, “the data released today once again confirms the EPA's and DEP's findings that levels of contaminants found do not possess a threat to human health and the environment. These findings are consistent with thousands of pages of water quality data previously accumulated by state and local authorities and by Cabot Oil & Gas. As with the other findings, EPA did not indicate that those contaminants that were detected bore any relationship to oil and gas development in the Dimock area.

“Cabot's operations in Dimock have led to significant economic growth in the area, marked by a collaborative relationship with the local community. Cabot will continue to cooperate with federal, state and local officials in using the best and most accurate science to address public concerns.”

Kathryn Klaber, president of the Marcellus Shale Coalition, the leading industry group in Pennsylvania, said, “We are very pleased that EPA has arrived upon these fact-based findings, and that we're now able to close this chapter once and for all.”

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